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Schön's seminal contribution in 1983, The Reflective Practitioner, attracted the attention of the educational community, and reflective practice as a process of self-directed professional development has been common rhetoric among teachers and teacher educators for at least a decade. Researchers have discussed reflection within various contexts such as teacher as inquirer, teacher as researcher, and teacher as learner, and reflective inquiry is seen as central to action research in education (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis & McTaggert, 1981; Suter, 1998).

Suter (1998) argued that "teachers who favour this approach to research understand the complex nature of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, but at the same time, are intent on studying their professional craft in a personalized, intimate, empowering way" (p. 98). However, our own observations substantiate arguments from the literature indicating that reflection as practiced tends to focus on technical knowledge (Coplin, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Louden, 1992), and seldom moves into the more complex underlying meanings that Louden termed the personal, problematic, or critical interest. As Raines and Shadiow (1997) put it, this is the challenge of thinking beyond doing. We believe that accessing such meaning is necessary to reflective practice and to the professional growth that realizes Schön's original vision of the reflective practitioner. We also believe that effective professional development is central to effecting educational reform.

The purpose of this paper is to describe an action research project in our university childcare centre that focused on the nature of the reflective process. The project originated with the childcare centre director's concern for providing more professional development for her staff. In discussion with the vice-chair of the centre, who was at the time a researcher in early childhood at the university (and also the first author of this paper), ideas emerged that were then discussed with the staff. A graduate student at the university, also an educational practitioner (and the second author of this paper), expressed interest in the project and became part of the group.

We discussed a protocol from a previous study (Lindsay, 1996) which focused teachers' reflective inquiry on their language in interaction with children. As early childhood educators, we shared the belief that the quality of our interactions with children lies at the heart of the quality of our programs. The childcare staff and director believed that by focusing on the language the caregivers used in interaction with the children, they might find ways to modify it to better accomplish their beliefs about quality in childcare. As early childhood practitioners who already practised a reflective inquiring approach, they were also interested in the questions we raised about the nature of this reflective process. The two authors of this paper became the facilitators of the project. Details of design were worked out among staff, the director and ourselves. However, the staff and director chose not to participate in the writing process because

of their busy schedules. In this paper, we discuss the introductory stage of the study as the teachers were beginning to work with the reflective process.

Theoretical Background

Many professional development programs are composed of workshops, lectures, video presentations, informal talks, and demonstrations. An underlying assumption in this approach has characterized professional development for much of this century. This assumption is the belief that teacher development consists of accumulating strategies and materials designed and then delivered to teachers by outside sources (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Furthermore, Darling-Hammond (1998) argued that "professional development often bears little relation to what teachers want to study" (p. 9). Similarly, Little (1992) described how teachers are often cast into a passive role with regard to the content and format of professional development. In summary, "much of professional development as it exists has not enjoyed a good reputation" (Collison, 1994, p. 24).

Given the above, it is not surprising that there is much current discussion about teacher development of a very different form. Arguing powerfully for the reasons behind the pervasive failure of educational reform, Pogrow (1997) claimed one problem has been the false assumption that theory and policy merely need be disseminated, and practitioners will then determine their application. Instead, he spoke strongly of the importance of local knowledge in helping practitioners structure interventions to effectively implement reforms. Although in itself professional development is not sufficient to enact educational reform, making it more practitioner-based certainly would support the success of reform endeavours.

The argument for practitioner-based professional development has received critical support in recent years. Darling-Hammond (1997) discussed the need for spending money on staff development but not in the form of one-shot workshops. She saw the lack of investment in teacher knowledge as a function "of the factory model approach to schooling adopted nearly a century ago, which invested in an administrative bureaucracy to design, monitor, and inspect teaching, rather than in the knowledge of the people doing the work" (p. 230). Darling-Hammond (1998) suggested that teachers experience much more powerful learning when vehicles for learning are "connected to the teachers' work with their students, linked to subject matter and to the concrete task of teaching, organized around problem solving, informed by research and sustained over time by ongoing conversations and coaching" (p. 9).

Similarly, Clandinin (1993) argued that teachers' professional development must be situated in their practice. Still more strongly, Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) discussed the need to give teachers responsibility for their own processes of change. In other words, there is growing advocacy for professional development that is contextualized within practitioners' own practice and is self-directed. Furthermore, this discussion implies that professional development should be fundamentally contemplative and critical, rather than cumulative. Such a direction respects the autonomy, integrity, and professionalism of practitioners. As well, it raises the question of how practitioners should pursue professional development construed this way.

Reflective practice, a concept primarily credited to Schön (1983), supports and facilitates such self-directed, contextualized, contemplative and critical professional development. The reflective process generally is understood to be a means by which a learner through contemplation of her/his own practice develops conscious understanding of methods, purposes, technical processes, and their implications (Kruse, 1997).

There has been much debate in the literature about the significance of reflective practice. Kruse (1997) discussed two competing views of reflection in the current literature. In one view, she argues, reflecting upon practice is seen as just a trend. The other view she described as seeing reflection as "a transformational and enduring reality, absolutely essential to improved teaching and learning as the bridge between theory and practice" (p. 47). We firmly believe in the latter view, and agree with Millies (1992) who argued that reflection can raise the consciousness of teachers about their practice, can help teachers make sense of their worlds, and can act as a stimulus for self-analysis.

Among those who subscribe to the value of reflection, there also has been much discussion about just what constitutes reflective practice. One quality that seems generally agreed upon is a need to relate thought about teaching to action within the classroom, and the need for reasoned vision and meaningful strategies in pursuing school improvements (Kruse, 1997). The second point of agreement Kruse noted is that there needs to be a sound philosophical basis from which one begins reflecting. Beyond this, there appears to be little consensus. Although educators have come to acknowledge the importance of teacher reflection, there is not much agreement about what teacher reflection actually is (Millies, 1992).

Still another caveat to establishing meaningful reflection as part of professional practice is the level at which researchers believe it must be undertaken. Schön (1983) emphasized the need for reflection to go beyond simple and superficial commentary, and Elliott (1993) warned of the dangers of seeing reflection purely as an instrumental mode of thinking aimed at the development of clinical and technical competencies alone. In practice, this essential aspect has often been missed (Patterson & Shannon, 1993). Raines and Shadiow (1997) commented that all practitioners judge themselves to be reflective, but this may represent only "an unproductive superficiality" (p. 250).

Tickle (1993) found that teachers seem to reflect easily on the technical aspects of their practice, such as subject matter, children's needs, teaching strategies, management of space and resources, and school policies. However, he expressed concern that many teachers seem bound to a technical view of their expertise. He argued that teachers can "become too skillful at techniques of selective-in-attention, junk categories, and situational control, techniques which they use to preserve the constancy of their knowledge-in-practice" (p. 116). Tickle found that teachers increasingly reflected in the realm of practical propositions but "the elements of aims and values of educational theory were not a matter for extensive deliberation, especially if not challenged by circumstances" (p. 120).

Similarly, Morrison (1995) claimed that in reflecting on practice, teachers rarely make explicit or conscious reference to educational theory. He argued that not all reflection on the practical situation in the classroom is equally relevant, equally cogent, or equally sensitive to moral

standards and interpersonal relationships (p. 25). He stated that "mere reflection from out of a teacher's untutored cognitive resources may fail to come to grips with the complexity of a practical situation or to explore the wide range of alternative explanations of classroom phenomena or alternative solutions to educational problems" (p. 25).

Raines and Shadiow (1997) claimed that thinking about teaching is only the beginning, and that reflection must continue, looking for patterns in practice and searching for reasons for one's successes or failures. They argued that this requires an ongoing dialogue between a teacher's theoretical position and his/her practical experiences. Therefore, they claimed "reflection is not a point of view but rather a process of deliberate examination of the interrelationships of ends, means and contexts" (p. 251).

This discussion reveals that reflection on practice, which at first glance may seem a simple, almost intuitive task, is more complex. In fact, a fundamental problem is that "reflection is invisible" (Millies, 1992, p. 27). Another part of the problem may be that performers do not learn easily from experience in complex contexts (Butler, 1996). According to Hare and Portelli (1996), what is needed is a specific process for effective inquiry, reflection and change. Jacobsen (1998) argued that "without intentional efforts to make actions and understandings as explicit as possible" (p. 130), meaningful reflective analysis is unlikely to occur. Similarly, Pogrow (1996) claimed that carefully constructed structures are necessary to support practitioner development, and Raines and Shadiow (1997) point to the importance of developing particular skills for observing and analyzing teaching to support reflective practice. These arguments indicate the potential value of a process that practitioners can use to guide and facilitate meaningful reflective practice.

A protocol for reflection on practice emerged in a previous study by Lindsay (1996). This protocol focuses practitioners' attention on interaction, providing them with insight into how they organize participation of children and develop the topic or activity in the different exchanges. A basic assumption was that participation structures and topic development are central to teaching and learning. Certainly many educational reforms are essentially calls for alternative forms of organization of both participation and topic, such as in child-centered or learner-centered approaches, and in constructivist approaches (e.g., Scardamalia, 1994; Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992).

There were two unexpected outcomes in the original study (Lindsay, 1996). The first was the overwhelming support of the teachers for the process despite its substantial demands on their time. Their response certainly suggested that we were tapping something fundamental.

The second unexpected outcome was the teachers' insistence on the crucial role of the facilitator. Originally the facilitator's role was seen as simply a vehicle to provide the information for the teachers' perusal and reflection. However, the teachers were insistent that the role of the facilitator was crucial and that her own personal knowledge of children and teaching was instrumental in helping them gain the kinds of insight they did.

The teachers argued that the insights gained through this process indicated the limitations of traditional observational processes. They provided concrete examples of how the kinds of

understandings that emerged were used, for example in communication with parents, reporting, and adaptation of practice. They all advocated the adoption of this approach of reflection on interaction for professional development generally. One final recommendation from those teachers was that we try working from just the tape recordings rather than the detailed transcripts due to the amount of time required to construct them. In the action research project we describe here, we sought to better understand how the guided reflection process developed previously would work in our attempts to facilitate professional development within our university childcare centre. We also wanted to try the alternative approach of a reflection based on recordings rather than transcripts.

Project Design

The protocol for guided reflective practice used here involves four phases. In the first phase, familiarization, a facilitator spends considerable time in the program acting in a similar capacity to a parent volunteer. This phase is not complete until the children and practitioners are feeling comfortable with his/her presence.

In the second phase, recording, a facilitator uses a combined audio/video taping technique that provides clear recordings of one-to-one interaction, and functions unobtrusively. The practitioner wears a small portable audio recorder which makes an audio recording of all his/her interactions with children. The facilitator uses a camcorder and positions himself/herself around the edges of the room using the zoom lens to pick up detail as necessary. Because of the separate audio recording, video recording can be used to obtain wider contextual information as well as the detail not found on the audio recordings, such as facial expression, eye contact, body position, and so forth.

In the third phase, transcribing, transcriptions are made by the facilitator(s) that include detailed verbal and nonverbal information comprising each interaction of the practitioner and a child or children. These interactions are called episodes. Contextual information is added to provide a transcript that recreates the context of each episode.

In the final phase, discussion, the practitioner is given a copy of the transcript in advance and then she/he meets with the facilitator(s). The transcript functions as an artifact on which to base discussion. They discuss the transcript one episode at a time considering the practitioner's purpose in each interactive episode, and how she/he thinks she/he is achieving these purposes, or not. These discussions are audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for the practitioner's statements of purpose which are then summarized into a list to be reviewed and used in the discussion with the participant at the next session. This four-phase process is repeated through an iterative process until the practitioner believes that they have accomplished at least some of the understanding or changes they have identified as desirable.

Procedures

We designed the project collaboratively with the staff and director in the childcare centre. Although all staff wanted to participate, for logistical reasons only four could participate in the recording-discussion process. We followed purposive sampling methods (Miles & Huberman,

1994), and selected four to represent maximum variation in professional experience. Similarly we chose eight focus children representing the range of ages and interactive styles in the program, as well as both boys and girls. We examined only the interaction of the practitioners with these children. We chose to record these interactions in free play sessions. Free play in this centre may be outdoors or indoors. It includes story reading and a snack time which extends over about 30 minutes in which children may choose to have snack or not.

The introductory stage of the study consisted of two cycles of the reflective process described above. In each, we followed the four phases described above. Throughout, time was allowed to discuss what we were doing and why. To provide us with the information on the effectiveness of the process, we designed a fifth phase. At the end of the first discussion session, using an open-ended interview approach, the practitioners were asked to comment on how the process was functioning for them. Then they were asked to construct a statement of intent regarding modifications to their practice that they saw as appropriate. In the subsequent discussion, they returned to these statements, identified any observed modifications, and then formulated a new statement.

As part of the project's purpose was to examine the usefulness of the non-transcription modification, the second session was not transcribed in full. Instead we constructed an outline of the episodes, provided the practitioners with a copy of both the audio and video tapes in advance, and then ran the discussion session by viewing and listening to the two tapes episode by episode using the outline as a guide.

Initially, only the practitioners' comments in the fifth phase were coded, using the approach of Miles and Huberman (1994). However, at this point we recognized that many comments relevant to our interests were interspersed throughout the substantive discussion of the transcript or tapes. We also saw that the discussion transcripts revealed explicit evidence of reflection, providing us with another entire set of data. In other words, we had the evidence of reflection ongoing in the process, as well as the practitioners' comments about what they thought was happening.

We decided to use existing definitions of reflective practice as an analytic tool, and from the many available chose Louden's (1992) framework of forms and interests of reflective practice, adapting it minimally for our purposes. The adapted framework and our definitions of each form and interest are provided in Figure 1.

	Spontaneity	**Replay and Rehearsal**	**Introspection**	**Enquiry**
Technical				
Personal				
Problematic & Critical				

Figure 1. Forms and Interests of Reflection Adapted from Louden (1992)
[Note: The forms of reflection are spontaneity, replay and rehearsal, introspection, and enquiry. We reordered the forms of reflection to reflect the order from left to right in which they were

used in our study. Spontaneity is reflection that happens 'out of the blue'. Replay and rehearsal involves the identifying and explaining of events. Introspection is looking into an event to further explanation and go beyond the first level of explanation. Enquiry involves planning, acting, observing, and reflecting with an effort to change practice, a process that is elsewhere referred to as action research.
The interests for reflection are technical, personal, and problematic/critical. Technical interests includes the rule-governed aspects of practice. Personal interests are the connection of personal experiences to practice to facilitate explanation of practice. We collapsed Louden's problematic and critical interests into one category as we found with this data set that distinguishing between the two was difficult. We defined these interests as a movement to rethink practice and to reconsider fundamental goals, theory and beliefs.]

We analyzed the practitioners' complete discussions using this framework. Throughout the entire process, we kept a research journal to provide detailed records of the data collection and analysis procedures.

Results

It was clear, even in this introductory stage of the project, that all four forms of reflection identified by Louden (1992) were happening. However, we did not see similar breadth in the interests for reflection. The protocol for reflection almost ensured that the practitioners' reflections would focus on what Louden termed technical knowledge. However, we had anticipated that providing this means for our teachers to see their practice in such intricate detail would in turn lead to spontaneous questioning, rethinking, and problematizing issues in their practice. In Louden's terms, we had expected to see the teachers' interests focus rapidly at the problematic and critical levels. However, here in the introductory stage what we saw was considerably different.

Technical Interests

The vast majority of the practitioners' thinking in this introductory stage focused on technical knowledge. According to Louden (1992), technical knowledge is that which focuses on rule-governed practice, or how practice reflects or conforms to predetermined criteria. In our work, this involved the practitioners describing what was happening and explaining it in terms of accepted practice in their field. This involved identifying particular aspects of their practice decontextualized from the ongoing stream of practice, considering them, and explaining them.

However, in our study there were also many comments about the process and how it was functioning to permit the practitioners access to their practice. Some were elicited by the phase five questions. Others were unelicited. We considered such procedural commentary to also be a form of technical interest. A third form of technical interest that we identified was what we called contemplative activity. That is, it still focused on rule-governed behavior, but reflected an extension of the teachers' previous knowledge about technical aspects of their practice.

Explaining Rule-governed Practice

In the discussions of transcripts and tapes between the practitioners and facilitators, there were many instances of talk focused on explaining a particular practice that is seen as routine by the practitioners. The following episode in which the practitioner explains why she had asked the child if he wanted his name printed on his picture is typical : [P = practioner; F = facilitator]

P: so I always ask and you know
F: ok
P: and I usually ask where they want me to write it but I notice I didn't just so they arein control of the picture and they can tell me if they want their name on it ok where they want it

Commenting On The Procedure for Reflection

The practitioners made many comments, both elicited and unelicited, about how this process of guided reflection was affecting their thinking about their practice. They commented especially in the first discussion on how difficult it was to explain why they had done what they did. They extended this by saying that what they did was natural or second nature, as in the excerpt below:

P: it is it is very hard it's so second nature it's hard to break down why
F: yes
P: I was doing it even though
F: yes
P: it's just second nature you just do it

However, they also observed, even in the first discussion, that it was fascinating and also a very positive self-affirming process as they saw hard evidence that they were doing what they believed they should be doing.

Clearly, the process became easier as they gained experience with it, and by the end of the second discussion, they were able to explain in quite concrete terms what the process was doing. As one said, it necessitated her making observations she would not make otherwise. She also indicated that it gave her time to think and to revisit an interaction which was not possible in real time. Finally, she commented on the value of discussion with someone else and the value of seeing practice on paper. Another requested copies of the transcripts to take home to her husband, as she thought it would help explain her job to him. She said that she had been trying to get him to understand what she did but with little success, and felt that the transcripts would provide a concrete tool that might help her to help him understand. Finally, the practitioners told us that they were discussing the procedures among themselves, something we thought would likely constitute a basis for reflection.

Contemplative Activity

Contemplative technical interest was seen in various forms. What we thought of as the first example of contemplative activity was the frequent expressions of surprise or amazement registered by the practitioners when reading or viewing their practice. For example, one remarked that she hadn't realized how distinctive her interaction pattern with one child was and how obvious it was until she viewed the tapes. Similarly another practitioner said :

F: ok ok now can you comment on the process in general regardless of which technique that we use in terms of you and what you're learning um what are you learning from the process what are you getting from it
P: it's interesting cause I wasn't aware of what I'm what's really stuck like today with the humour with Lara and Alex and how I do that with some children like with those two children and not with others and how I do read the other children differently.
F: mmhm
P: so it's really interesting to watch cause it just you're not aware of it until you see it
F: mmhm
P: so I'm learning how I do treat everyone differently which you know you do anyways but in in such extreme matters like that like with some children I'll be like that and with other children I can't cause they don't get it and it's interesting to know that subconsciously I guess I know that
F: yeh

Another sign of surprise was the comment 'wow' which appeared quite frequently throughout their discussions of the transcripts and recordings. Other evidence of their surprise occurred in comments like the following:

P: man I said that - I can't believe it *(laughter)*
F: that's what Leanne said you'll be amazed on how we just do things and we don't know what they're doing

As well, the practitioners sometimes registered marked indrawn breaths when reviewing an episode as if they were suddenly aware of what they were seeing. Similarly, marked exhalations occurred suggesting recognition of the significance of what they were seeing. As well, there were frequent bursts of laughter across the discussions as the practitioners examined the records of their interactions with the children. This laughter typically seemed to be a response to something that was familiar, but that they had suddenly seen in a new light.

One form of surprise that was very welcome was when practitioners saw evidence of the effectiveness of a strategy they used. In the following case, the practitioners had been following a particular pattern with one child but had not seen evidence of its effectiveness until now:

P: there they are hey wow
F: so it's really working it's prompting him to comment
P: to comment on it
F: and he had gone before you
P: yeh
F: so you repeat *reading* and then
P: so just bringing more language into it showing him what other things are happening on the page
F: right
P: cause obviously he's interested cause he's talking about it himself
F: right
P: I can't believe he says they're standing very still

F: mmm
P I'm going to have to tell Vivian that

The practitioners registered more intense surprise when we first gave them the lists of strategies compiled from the data analysis of the first discussion, as seen in the following comments:

P: wow this is amazing
F: I mean this is the complexity
P: this is in half an hour
F: yes
P: this is in half an hour
F: yeh
P: I'm doing all this in half an hour
F: That's right
P: without even knowing I am doing it
F: that's right

We identified what we thought of as another form of contemplation in the practitioners' hesitations or uncertainties. We observed episodes in the practitioners' discussions when they could not identify readily their intent in a particular interaction, or if they could, to provide explicit explanations of it. This was evident in the prefacing of comments with "I think," hesitations before their explanations, false starts, and changes in the direction of an explanation.

However, what seemed a more salient demonstration of this was when we observed that after a practitioner had made an initial explanation of her intent in a particular interaction, we would sometimes offer further interpretations. The practitioners frequently (but not always) agreed with these, but for some reason had not offered them themselves, as in the following discussion:

F: Now that sequence of questions?
P: I think the start there is an open ended question. It's just basically what are you going to do.
F: But after that you're kind of pulling ideas out of her. Like you know after that what are you going to do and you know supper what are you going to have for supper. So it's extending conversation again?
P: uh huh
F: It's getting her to talk and think through things?
P: um hm

Another example of this type of sequence is seen below but with a clearer indication of insight gained:

F: do you think a lot in there could conceivably be an addition of a conceptual notion too cause now you've got a lot you've got number out there?
P: yeh
F: could the use of conceptual language
P: yeh
F: that would partly be what I would see there but

P: yeh cause I probably but it was probably covered on the page cause you can roll like 50 on the page so I probably look at them there are a lot of teddy bears
F: so that's a concept that you can actually attach to a title ok so *reading* you know if it's not the focus kids we haven't actually put the detail in *reading* are you beginning to figure out how we're doing this *looking at*
the conventions
P: yes ok I can see it now (*laughter)*

Furthermore, they sometimes commented on how their interpretation of events was different after reading the transcripts than it was at the time.

Another way in which contemplation was being brought to bear on technical knowledge was seen in the practitioners' comments regarding what they should have done in a particular situation. In the following example, the practitioner, on reading the transcript, saw what she was doing and also what she thought she should have been doing:

P: and you know and I'm looking at him and he goes it's over there and I'm like ok and so I should have been stepping in there and things and saying show me your garage and then he could have showed me cause I was looking totally in the wrong direction

Similarly, the following comments indicate concern about what the practitioner had done with respect to her expectations for herself:

P: you know what reading this I didn't feel really good about this exchange because it seems like I was just feeling impatient and what I really meant was that she could check with the teacher before she's picking them and that it was snack time and we were doing something else and looking back on it I think that's what it was it was coming out of my impatience because um ..
F: you just wanted her to get away from the flowers and on to snack
P: yeh yeh

Another indication of this concern was that sometimes they would jokingly ask if they could change some aspect of their interaction as they viewed it in the transcript or on the tape.

At other times, the practitioners were able to make observations that affirmed their practice, or told them that they were practising what they believed to be appropriate practice, as seen here:

P: mmm, and I'm really glad to see that I didn't touch it after telling her to use her eyes to look at it (*laughter)*

One more way in which practitioners' technical knowledge was being evoked in these first sessions was the acquisition of terminology that could be used to identify their purposes in interaction with children. Their technical knowledge was being expanded through the discussions focused on interaction and the strategies they were using. For example, early in the first discussion of this practitioner's interactions, she was explaining what she was doing and we suggested a term that could describe that strategy as seen below:

P: yeh, umm.... I'm not sure, I guess I was trying to say it in a positive way, um you never want to be, um what's the word, my brain's really fried today, um ..
F: well I would say, the other I would call it directive, I don't know just
P: yeh, directive, that's the word

The practitioners seemed to readily adopt such terms with no further prompting and use them in discussion of subsequent episodes. However other terms were offered by them and then picked up by the facilitators who also used them. These were also the terms identified in the analysis of practitioners' purposes and summarized and returned to the practitioners for the discussion of the next recording ,in this way helping to develop the acquisition of this vocabulary.

Our protocol ensured that any discussion would be grounded at the level of technical knowledge but we had expected that reflection would move quickly beyond the technical focus. Contrary to our expectations, the most frequent focus in these first two discussions was on technical interests. However, we did see some evidence of the emergence of problematic/critical interests. These are described below.

Moving Into Problematic/Critical Interests

Some of the problematic/critical interests appeared spontaneously within the practitioners' explanation of practice. One example is the following instance in which the practitioner had been explaining the process of ensuring that a child had followed one of the centre's guidelines. She then went on to question this guideline:

P: mmhm but do you know what reading this afterwards I'm wondering if maybe we need to rethink our reasoning about that
F: ok
P: just because if it's something that's going to help them feel better why should it be a power struggle
F: yeh, good point
P: and if that's what helps them feel better maybe we need to rethink that

However, the clearest movement towards the problematic was established by the new fifth phase of the protocol that asked the practitioners to identify a focus or modification that they would like to study through the project. One example is the following:

P: yeh I try to think with Trevor I'm aware of what I do and why I'm doing it like when I talk to him and if I'm not doing this I do it do you know what I mean like if I'm just with every with every casual conversation I try to do it now with him because it works
F: do
P: like the whole way of repeating back and bringing him in
F: ok
P: because at times you don't do that
F: ok
P: but now I try consciously now I try to do it all the time just to keep him going
F: because ...

P: because I'm aware yes because now I know it works so now I do that and so I've actually passed it on to Vivian
F: mmhm
P: you know because it works with him and so every time I have a conversation I try to do that

In summary, our results indicate that even in this introductory stage, the reflective practice protocol we used served as a means for eliciting reflection on practice. Although much of the focus in this early stage was on the technical interests of reflection, we were also seeing the emergence of more problematic/critical interests. There was some evidence of personal interests used to explain practice but not enough at this stage to discuss its nature.

Discussion

In our introduction, we discussed the need to better understand reflection and how to integrate it into practice. We noted the inherent difficulties in accomplishing this task, in particular the invisibility of the reflective process and the difficulty of learning in the complex environment of teaching. We also discussed the need for reflection to move beyond a purely technical interest and into the realm of the interrelationships between practice and theory. We argued that a process designed specifically to guide or facilitate reflection may be useful.

What we observed in the introductory stage of this project supported the understanding that reflection is no simple undertaking. We saw how difficult a task it was at first for our practitioners to begin to explain what, in practice, they did so naturally. We also saw hard evidence for the complexity of teaching, especially in the practitioners' amazement at re-viewing their practice in this way. However, using the process as we did here, we were also able to see how different ways of guiding reflection can elicit different forms of reflection and help to guide reflection towards more problematic or critical interests. As well, the analysis process allowed us to track how the different reflective interests emerged. Finally, use of this process allowed us to reveal that reflection in fact can be rendered visible.

Although at first, attention in these discussions to technical interests was disconcerting, our further analysis helped us to understand why. We observed clearly what has been termed the tacitness or unconsciousness of teachers' knowledge (Isakson & Boody, 1993; Fenstermacher, 1993; Jacobsen, 1998). Fenstermacher observed that if knowledge that is tacit can be raised to the level of consciousness, "the teacher can deliberate or reflect on it and, if it is found meritorious in that teacher's conception of his or her work, advance it as a reason to justify acting as he or she did" (p. 46). We believe that this was the process we were observing in these practitioners' early experience with the guided reflective process.

In other words, rather than being disillusioned that our approach was not resulting in the more problematic/critical approach to reflection we had hoped for, we began to realize that what we were accomplishing was likely an important part of that process. Although the knowledge that became articulated was technical in nature, to have attempted to move into problematic consideration of practice without first explicating practitioners' tacit knowledge might not have provided sufficient grounding for deep critical thought.

Another observation we made here concerned the role being played by the facilitators. This role resembles what Day (1991) called 'a critical friend' and as the teachers in the earlier study (Lindsay, 1996) had insisted, it seems to play a central role in the reflective process. According to Day, the critical friend provides an external intervention which offers teachers the means by which they can begin to engage in what he calls deliberative inquiry. Similarly, Fessler and Christiansen (1992) argued that making change requires technical assistance and support and appropriate organizational conditions, all qualities of the project design provided by the facilitators. Furthermore, what was evident here was the way in which the facilitators used their own theoretical knowledge of teaching to guide the discussion in ways that elicited the practitioners' tacit knowledge and encouraged them to think about the more complex implications involved in details of their practice. These observations show us one way in which researchers can link their expertise directly into practice.

In recent years, the effecting of educational reform has been discussed intensively. Following years of approaches that have typically been systemic in nature, strongly worded arguments for locating the focus of reform in teacher practice are now appearing. As Darling-Hammond (1998) argued, the problems seen in schools today "are not the fault of teachers but of a system that has long failed to support the work of teachers" (p. 6). Given this argument, processes that support improving teacher practice are also processes that support educational reform.
However, as Eisner (1998) stated, "learning to see and talk about teaching in ways that are useful is not easy. . . . It will require training and opportunities to see teachers . . . whose teaching practices can be described, interpreted and appraised" (p. 5). We believe that the kind of reflection we are seeing in this project may be one way in which such teacher development can be fostered and perhaps in turn be employed in educational reform initiatives. Finally, we think that the work described here reveals some important insights into the nature of reflection and the accomplishment of reflective practice. These insights suggest how we may move beyond the theory and into the practice of reflection.

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